

Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of this Application is respectfully requested. Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1, 4-6, 8-11 and 14-46 are pending in the application with claims 1, 7, 8, 11, 14 and 43 being the independent claims. Therefore, the claims actively being prosecuted are 1, 5-11 and 41-46. Claims 15-36 and 38-40 were withdrawn from consideration due to a restriction requirement. Support for the claim amendments can be found throughout the specification and the claims as originally filed.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-6, 10, 11, 37, 41 and 42, under 35 U. S. C. § 112, first paragraph was maintained and claims 43 and 46 were newly rejected under 35 U. S. C. §112, first paragraph. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and disagree with each of the specific bases set forth by the examiner for the rejection.

Claims 2 and 37 have been cancelled. Therefore, the rejection of these claims is now moot. Solely in an effort to expedite the prosecution and without acquiescing in the propriety of the rejection, Applicants have amended claims 1, 5-8, 10-14 and 43. The claim amendments are based on a telephone discussion with the Examiner and Applicants believe that the amendments overcome the rejection. Based on all of the above, the rejection should be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 37, 41, and 42 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph was maintained and newly added claims 43 and 46 were also rejected on the same basis. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and disagree with the specific basis for the rejection as set forth by the Examiner. In any event, claims 2 and 37 have been cancelled. Therefore, the rejection of these claims is now moot.

Solely in an effort to expedite the prosecution and without acquiescing in the propriety of the rejection, Applicants have amended claims 1, 5-8, 10-14 and 43. The claim amendments are based on a telephone discussion with the Examiner and Applicants believe that the amendments overcome the rejection. Based on all of the above, the rejection of the claims should be withdrawn

The Examiner objected to claim 2 under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicants respectfully traverse this objection. However, as claim 2 has been cancelled the rejection is now moot

The Examiner noted that claims 7-9, 14, 44, and 45 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants believe that the claims have been amended accordingly and that the objection should be withdrawn.


Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.



Lawrence B. Bugaisky
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 35,086

Date: February 11, 2003

1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600
352483.1